

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY BONN

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AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

CINCUSNAVEUR

CINCUSAFE

USDOCOSOUTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ATHENS 1027

EUO. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GR US

SUBJ: ANTI-AMERICANISM AND THE GREEK PRESS

"THE STORIES OF THE GREEKS ARE MANIFOLD
AND MOST OF THEM SEEM TO ME RIDICULOUS."
HERODOTUS C.520 B.C.

1. MUCH OF THE GREEK PRESS IS IN HIGH DUDGEON. THEIR
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WRATH - THIS TIME - WAS PROVOKED BY A SPATE OF REPORTS

IN THE UNITED STATES THAT THE GREEK PRESS IS ANTI-AMERICAN AND THAT SOME PAPERS RECEIVE FOREIGN COMMUNIST FINANCING.

2. VARIOUS PAPERS HAVE BEEN QUICK TO DENY BOTH CHARGES. AND JUST AS QUICKLY SEVERAL OF THEM HAVE LEAPED TO THE FANTASTIC CONCLUSION - FOR ANYONE BUT A GREEK - THAT THE STORIES IN THE U.S. PRESS ARE PART OF AN ARCHESTRATED CAMPAIGN BY THE USG AGAINST GREECE AND GREEK DEMOCRACY. REACTING TO THE HULABALOO, UNDER SECRETARY OF PRESS AND INFORMATION LAMBRIAS LABELED THE U.S. PRESS REPORTS "IRRESPONSIBLE". LAMBRIAS FURTHER NOTED THAT THE "GREEK PEOPLE HAVE NO ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENTS... (THEY) HARBOR BITTERNESS OVER THE AMERICAN POLICY DURING THE DICTATORSHIP AND OVER CYPRUS. BUT OF COURSE THE GREEK PEOPLE RECOGNIZE THE SERVICES OFFERED (GREECE) BY THE CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PRESS DURING THE DICTATORSHIP."

3. AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE GREEK PRESS AND THE GREEK PRESS'S OWN SELF IMAGE ARE IN SUCH CONTRADICTION THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM BOTH TO BE RIGHT. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY BOTH ARE PROBABLY WRONG, BECAUSE THEY ARE OVERSIMPLIFIED.

4. THE MUSHINESS OF THE CONCEPT "ANTI-AMERICANISM" IS SUCH TAHT IT IS DIFFICULT TO COME TO TERMS WITH IT. BUT IT IS PROBABLY SAFE TO SAY THAT WHAT MOST AMERICANS FIND OBJECTIONABLE IS WHAT MANY GREEK JOURNALISTS AND PUBLISHERS FIND OBJECTIVE:

- THE PROCLIVITY OF ATHENS DAILIES TO PORTRAY OFFICIAL AMERICAN POLICY IN THE WORST POSSIBLE LIGHT.
- THE PRESS WILLINGNESS TO ASCRIBE EVERY REAL AND IMAGINED GREEK REVERSE TO AMERICAN MACHINATION, E.G. WE NOW STAND ACCUSED OF MANIPULATING THE EC COMMISSION'S OPINION ON GREECE'S APPLICATION FOR FULL ACCESSION TO THE COMMON MARKET.
- THE PROPENSITY TO GIVE THE MOST SENSATIONAL TREATMENT TO ANY STORY THAT SEEMS TO JUSTIFY DISBELIEF IN THE UNITED STATES' BONA FIDES. IF THERE

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IS AN "EXPOSE" OF THE CIA ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD IT WILL BE PICKED UP AND BOOMED HERE.

- THE WILLINGNESS TO IGNORE OR DOWNPLAY ACTIONS BY OUR ADVERSARIES WHICH WOULD COME UNDER INSTANTANEOUS ATTACKS IF WE INDULGED IN THEM, E.G. ANGOLA HAS BEEN A SECONDARY STORY HERE.

5. THE GREEK PAPERS REPRESENT ALL SHADES OF OPINION

FROM RIGHT TO LEFT. BUT WHETHER LEFT, RIGHT OR CENTER ALL HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF LEFTISTS WORKING FOR THEM - A FACT THAT INFLUENCES THE SHAPE OF THE NEWS HERE. BUT THOUGH ALL PAPERS HAVE FOLLOWED ONE OR MORE OF THESE "ANTI-ERMICAN"THEMES, THEY HAVE NOT ALL DONE SO WITH EQUAL INTENSITY OR PERSISTENCE. THERE IS A GENERAL WILLINGNESS TO PORTRAY US AS BACKING TURKEY AGAINST GREECE. ALSO, AS A RULE, ALL PAPERS GIVE MAJOR AND FREQUENT COVERAGE TO REVELATIONS OF CIA ACTIVITIES AND, IN PARTICULAR, TO THE CONSTANT STREAM OF LEAKS AND REPORTS FROM THE PIKE AND CHURCH COMMITTEES. BUT IN THIS THEY ARE DOING LITTLE MORE THAN REPLAYING THE NEWS - MUCH OF IT GENERATED BY THE U.S. CONGRESS AND BY U.S. PAPERS. GIVEN THEIR ORIGIN AND THEIR INTENSITY, EVEN HERODOTUS WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY DISBELIEVING THESE STORIES.

6. BUT SYSTEMATIC, GRATUITOUS ATTEMPTS TO PILLORY THE U.S. IS NOT CHARACTERISTIC FO ALL THE GREEK PRESS. RATHER, THE CREATION OF FANTISIES DESIGNED TO SEMAR US IS A PARTICULAR PROVINCE OF THE LEFTIST PAPERS. IN GENERAL, THESE COMMUNIST AND NON-COMMUNIST DAILIES ARE THE OUTLETS FOR SUCH VICIOUS SALLIES AS THE ATTACKS ON THE AMBASSADOR, ALLEGATIONS THAT WE ARE SEEKING TO SEPARATE CRETE FROM GREECE OR THAT THE EMBASSY IS MOUNTING MACHINE GUNS ON THE EMBASSY ROOF.

7. IN ORDER TO GET SOME QUANTITATIVE FEEL FOR THE VOLUME AND DISTRIBUTION OF "ANTI-AMERICANISM" IN THE PRESS WE SURVEYED SEVEN PAPERS REPRESENTATIVE OF LEFT, CENTER AND CONSERVATIVE OPINION (BUT NOT INCLUDING THE TWO COMMUNIST JOURNALS) FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY. TWO CATEGORIES ARE ESPECIALLY INSTRUCTIVE, ONE ANTI-AMERICAN EDITORIALS AND THE CONFIDENTIAL

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OTHER TERMED "GRATUITOUS ANTI-AMERICANISM" (WHICH DOES NOT INCLUDE A LARGE NUMBER -- PERHAPS 100 -- WIRE SERVICE STORIES FROM THE UNITED STATES ABOUT CIA REVELATIONS). WE ESTABLISHED THE FOLLOWING BREAKDOWN (SAMPLE PAPERS IN ORDER OF CIRCULATION):

	GRATUITOUS	OTHER U.S.
	ANTI- EDITORIALS	AMERICANISM
	(NO. ARTICLES)	(NO. ARTICLES)
TA NEA(LIBERAL, OPPOSITION)	27	5
ELEFTHEROTYPIS(LEFT OF CENTER	50	4
ANTI-U.S.)		
VRADYNI(CONSERVATIVE,PRO- GOVERNMENT)	0	0
ACROPOLIS(CONSERVATIVE, PRO-	10	1

GOVERNMENT)

TO VIMA(LIBERAL, OPPOSITION)	13	2
KATHIMERINI(PRO-GOVERNMENT)	9	7
ATHINAIKI(LEFT-OF-CENTER, PRO-PASOK)	25	2

TOTALS 134 21/NOTE/

/NOTE/(FOR COMPARISON, IN THE SAMPLE THERE WERE 5 "PRO-AMERICAN" EDITORIALS, 1 IN VRADYNI AND 4 IN ACROPOLIS.)H

THUS ON ANY GIVEN DAY IN JANUARY THERE WAS APT TO BE ONE ANTI-AMERICAN EDITORIAL AND FOUR OR FIVE GRATUITOUS ANTI-AMERICAN ARTICLES SPREAD AROUND AMONG THESE SEVEN NEWSPAPERS. OF COURSE, FOR THE SAKE OF PERSPECTIVE IT SHOULD ALSO BE BORNE IN MIND THAT THE OTHER 95 PERCENT (OR MORE) OF SPACE IN THESE SAME NEWSPAPERS WAS DEVOTED TO OTHER DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS WITHOUT ANY AMERICAN SLANT, EITHER PRO OR CON. NOR COULD ALL OF THE ANTI-ERMICAN ARTICLES BE CONSIDERED PROMINENTLY FEATURED OR FRONT-PAGE NEWS, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS AS MANY AS ONE-THIRD WERE.

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AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
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8. WE QUITE CLEARLY CONTINUE TO HAVE A BAD PRESS
HERE. FOREIGN COMMUNIST FINANCING NO DOUBT PLAYS SOME ROLE
IN THIS. OF THE THIRTEEN DAILIES IN ATHENS, THE TWO SMALL
CIRCULATION COMMUNIST PAPERS ALMOST CERTAINLY RECEIVE
FOREIGN FINANCING. AND THE MOST VOCIFEROUSLY ANTI-
AMERICAN PAPER, THE LARGE CIRCULATION, SENSATIONALIST
ELEFHTHROTYPHA, SPENDS SO LAVISHLY AND IS REPORTEDLY
LOSING SO MUCH MONEY THAT ITS ECONOMIC SURVIVAL IS A WONDER.
BUT THOUGH SUSPICION THAT IT IS RECEIVING FOREIGN SUB-
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SIDIES MAY BE WELL FOUNDED, WE HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE TO
CONFIRM THIS. OTHER PAPERS HERE SEEM TO GET BY ON LOCAL
RESOURCES.

9. IN ANOTHER MORE IMPORTANT SENSE, TOO, ECONOMICS AND
POLITICS CONVENIENTLY MEET IN THE REPEATED ATTEMPTS OF
SOME OF THE PRESS TO FLAY US.

-- ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE, EXPOSES SELL NEWSPAPERS AND
ANTI-AMERICANISM MEETS THIS TEST OF THE MARKEPLACE. AT
A TIME WHEN POPULAR ANTI-AMERICANISM IS WIDESPREAD, REAL AND
ALLEGED EXPOSES OF AMERICA SELL ESPECIALLY WELL.
MOREOVER, AS CARAMANLIS' PRESENT POPULARITY MAKES IT
DIFFICULT FOR HIS PRESS ENEMIES TO ATTACK HIM PERSONALLY,
THE NECESSITY TO FOCUS ON US BECOMES MORE URGENT.

-- ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, MANY OF THE MEN WHO OWN, RUN
AND WRITE THE PAPERS WANT TO WEAKEN THE INFLUENCE OF THE
UNITED STATES. BOOMING WIRE SERVICE STORIES OF CIA
REVELATIONS, MAKING UP LURID TALES ABOUT USG ACTIVITIES IN
GREECE, READING EVIL INTO OUR POLICIES, ALL SERVE THIS END.

10. IT IS DIFFICULT TO KNOW EXACTLY THE IMPACT OF ALL
THIS ON PUBLIC OPINION AND ON POLITICS. IT WOULD
BE WRONG TO EXAGGERATE THE GREEK PRESS'S IMPORTANCE. IN
EUROPE, ONLY ALBANIA HAS A LOWER PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION OF
NEWSPAPERS THAN GREECE. IN A COUNTRY OF NINE
MILLION THE 13 ATHENS NEWSPAPERS HAVE A TOTAL DAILY

COUNTRY-WIDE CIRCULATION OF LESS THAN 900,000. MOST GREEKS REPEAT MOST GREEKS GET THEIR NEWS FROM THE STATE AND MILITARY OPERATED TELEVISION AND RADIO STATIONS WHICH DISPLAY BALANCE AND RESTRAINT IN THEIR COVERAGE OF THE U.S.

11. THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE PRESS TREATMENT DOES NOURISH POPULAR ANTI-AMERICANISM. IT ALSO TENDS TO INHIBIT THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF GREECE. BUT IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT HOSTILITY TOWARD INDIVIDUAL AMERICANS IS VIRTUALLY NON-EXISTENT. AS A MATTER OF FACT, FOR ALL HIS CURRENT WILLINGNESS TO DISTRUST AND DISLIKE THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT (PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF CYPRUS), THE GREEK MAN IN THE STREET REMAINS GENUINE
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IN HIS AFFECTION FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

12. THE MAN IN THE STREET DOES NOT RUN GREECE, HOWEVER. THE ATHENS-BASED POLITICIANS, BUREAUCRATS AND MILITARY DO. AND THEY DO READ THE PAPERS AND ARE DISPOSED TO BELIEVE MUCH OF WHAT THEY READ. NEVERTHELESS, AND DESPITE THE ANTI-AMERICANISM IN THE PRESS, OVER THE PAST YEAR, AS WE SUGGESTED IN ATHENS 0001, WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MOVE SLOWLY TOWARDS A RESTORATION AND GRADUAL RESHAPING OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GREECE.

13. WITH THE ATHENIAN READERSHIP PARTICULARLY IN MIND, WE ARE CONTINUING A MAJOR EFFORT TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS DESCRIBED ABOVE. WE HAVE FOUND THAT WE CANNOT PRODUCTIVELY ENGAGE IN A RUNNING, DAILY, ON THE RECORD, BATTLE WITH THE PRESS. SUCH A TACTIC ONLY SERVES TO KEEP ABSURD STORIES ALIVE AND PROVIDES AND INCENTIVE TO DREAM UP NEW ONES. INSTEAD, WE CARRY OUT SYSTEMATIC BACKGROUNDING WITH PUBLISHERS, EDITORS, WRITERS AND POLITICIANS IN WHICH WE KEEP SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT. THIS SEEMS TO HAVE HAD SOME GOOD EFFECT. IN ADDITION, ON A MEASURED BASES - WHEN AN ESPECIALLY DAMAGING STORY STARTS TO BLOSSOM AND WE HAVE OUR FACTS COLD - WE ISSUE A SPECIFIC "ON THE RECORD" DENIAL. WE HAVE ISSUED SUCH STATEMENTS FOUR TIMES IN RECENT WEEKS, ALSO WITH GOOD EFFECT. KUBISCH

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